

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

In light of the above amendments and remarks to follow, reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, and 8 are pending in this application.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for including unclear phrasing. Applicants have amended claim 1 to clarify the limitations. Accordingly, Applicants believe this rejection has been overcome.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sotome et al. (U.S. Patent 6,850,621) in view of Matsuo et al. (U.S. Patent 6,553,121). Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sotome and Matsuo in view of Greisinger (U.S. Patent 5,870,480). Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sotome and Matsuo in view of McGrath (U.S. Patent 6,259,795).

The present claims now recite "receiving input audio signals of N channels including at least front and back left channel directional components, front and back right channel directional components, and a sound field image signal." (Claim 1; Claim 2 contains similar limitations). As shown in Figure 1, the present invention uses 5 input channels; namely, left front (SLF 11), right front (SRF 12), left back (SLB 13), right back (SRB 14), and sound field image signals (SFF 15). By contrast, Sotome discloses 4 channels (L, C, R, N) as shown in Figure 15. Moreover, Matsuo, Greisinger, and McGrath only disclose 2 channels. Accordingly, Sotome, Matsuo, Greisinger, and/or McGrath fail to meet the five input audio channels recited in

the present claims and the rejected claims should now be allowed.

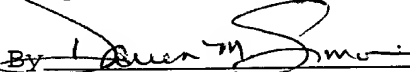
In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue.

If, however, for any reason the Examiner does not believe that such action can be taken at this time, it is respectfully requested that he/she telephone applicant's attorney at (908) 654-5000 in order to overcome any additional objections which he might have.

If there are any additional charges in connection with this requested amendment, the Examiner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 12-1095.

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Respectfully submitted,

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